1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

809 ingly enough to carry whatever an article of corresponding size is to be manufactured. An object to be fabricated in dimensions to match another article may also be compared to the latter by means of a length of string in which a knot is tied at the required length. Thus in the construction of a coffin, the length and width of the deceased were observed to be taken with a piece of string. The height of the reclining body, however, was ignored, hence the coffin was made too low.

412 Wedges for splitting wood are manufactured as required. They are cut from the lower
401 portion of a black spruce sapling and sharpened with an ax to a long tapering blade. Chips of wood are used as wedges in whip sawing. The back of a long handled ax head is used as a maul.

415 The implements associated with most cabins are a broom, funnel, and a dustpan cut from
322 a five gallon oil can. One family used an eagle wing as a whisk broom. When cooking is done on open fires, the tea stick is an indispensable piece of household equipment. It consists of a green willow pole, five or six feet long and an inch or more in its greatest diameter. The heavier section of the pole is sharpened and thrust into the ground at a forty-five degree angle to the fire. The upper section of the pole is notched for the handle of the kettle. The pole may be turned aside from the fire in removing the vessel. In a few days, when the ground becomes too soft to support the pole, a rock may be placed on top of the buried portion of the wood and another stone thrust into the open made by the pole as it leaves the ground. Two poles are discarded when they become dry or charred. When meat is roasted in front of open fires smaller poles, about three feet high are cut, and thrust into the ground almost vertically, the meat being hung on a sharpened point.

417 A considerable amount of apparatus is manufactured. In front of each cabin is found
322 a sawhorse for sawing wood. This consists of a bolling about six inches in diameter and five or six feet long. Close to each end two spruce saplings, about four feet long and an inch and a half in diameter, are driven into the ground so that they cross each other at about a thirty degree angle. The wood to be sawed is placed in these angles. The bolling is sometimes also used in splitting sawed lengths of wood. In the bush near the settlement are one or more saw pits. Ladders are made to reach caches. The rungs are either set in holes or nailed to side pieces. At either end of the ladder braces are nailed to the side pieces of lumber. For carpentering, a felled tree is levelled with an ax and raised on two stumps to serve as a workbench. Another piece of apparatus is used for bending green lumber in the manufacture of toboggans and sleds (Fig. 3, r, and Pl. 6, a). About six feet long, this consists of the lower trunk and part of the root of a spruce tree. Unnecessary portions of the root and trunk are trimmed away so that the wood exhibits a natural curve which is hewed and planed on its upper surface. Two poles, about two inches in diameter, are nailed to either side of the trunk. Where they project a few inches in front of the root, a crosspiece about eighteen inches long is lashed. The space between the root and crosspiece holds the lumber reserved for bending.

234 Traps, which are an important category of capital goods, are generally purchased, but
[433] a few men still build deadfalls or set two or three snares for wolf and coyote. A trapper generally owns from thirty to fifty steel traps of various sizes some of which are given to

1: Honigmann E-5 (1945-1965) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

[illegible] by most families.

Fur destined for commercial channels is dried on fur stretchers. The several kinds of stretchers may be classified into two types, those used to stretch fine winter fur and those used for beaver skins. Winter fur stretchers are of two sub-types. The first, which may be designated as the keel variety, consists of a flat board known as the stretching board or mould. The dimensions vary according to the pelt for which they are designed. Cut from the wood of a packing case or a piece of hewed poplar or spruce, a keel stretcher for mink is about fifteen inches long, three inches in its greatest width and about a quarter of an inch thick. The edges of the board are crudely bevelled. The foreward portion of the mould tapers sharply for an inch or so to hold the head of the skin being stretched. The keel for a mink stretcher consists of a piece of wood somewhat shorter than the length of the stretching board, half an inch thick, and two inches in its greatest width (Fig. 3, n, a). Along one side of its width the wood is perfectly level. In use this side of the keel is placed on top of the mould. Once inserted in the pelt with the pointed end under the head, the keel is lifted from the stretching board with a wedge consisting of any piece of wood about four inches long, an inch wide, and an inch thick.

The second sub-type of winter fur stretcher may be designated as the keelless variety (Fig. 3, n, b) and consists of two moulds separated by a wedge. These stretchers are used for furs like lynx, fox, coyote, wolverine, and wolf. Two pieces of hewed spruce about one and one quarter inches thick are used in the preparation of the mould. They are finished with an axe and planed smooth. For coyote and lynx skins each board is about six feet long and five to six inches across at the widest portion. The upper portion of each board tapers to a sharp point for about the foreward three inches. The rest of one side is gently rounded. The other side is level for about three quarters of the length. The wood is then sharply rounded to provide a handlelike end about a foot long. These boards are inserted into the skin so that the level sides are together. Between them is inserted a wedge, four feet long and tapering to a sharp point from a width of about four inches. The wedge forces the stretching boards apart thus spanning the skin. Including the time occupied in finding a suitable tree and hewing the lumber, about four hours are required to make a pair of these moulds.

A beaver stretcher is made by bending a green black spruce sapling, about seven feet long and an inch and a half in its widest diameter, into a half oval. A crosspiece, consisting of a spruce pole four feet long is lashed across the open end of the oval. The skin to be stretched is lashed to the stretcher with fine babiche, small holes being cut in the pelt's rim about two inches apart.

The frame used in cleaning moosehide is made by providing a ridge pole about twelve feet long and three or four inches in diameter. One end of this pole is lashed or nailed to a tree at a point about twelve feet from the ground. The other end is generally supported in a forked stick or may also be lashed to a nearby tree. Two poles three inches in diameter and about ten feet long are tied to this ridge pole with their lower end resting on the ground in a forty-five degree angle. The space between these poles is somewhat greater than the

1: Honigmann: E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

hide which is to be cleaned. Another pole is placed across the lower portion of the horizontally leaning poles and lashed in position. The skin is then stretched and fastened to the frame. When hides are to be softened, they are fixed on a smaller frame, consisting of four poles, in which the side poles are anchored in the ground perpendicularly (Pl. 8, a).

Construction of most apparatus and all tool making is done by men. Young girls sometimes make stretchers for squirrel skin and women commonly erect the poles for stretching and softening moosehide.

Machines employed by the Kaska have either been purchased from traders or adopted from white sources. Among the machines in the former category are sewing machines, owned by women but purchased by men, and outboard motors, the property of men. A pulley is a common possession and in the fall is used in conjunction with an improvised winch to pull boats out of the water. The winch is made by driving two poles about four inches in diameter and five feet long into the ground about six feet apart. Each pole is grooved on the side which is away from the water and about six inches from the top. A smooth green pole, about four inches in diameter, is fitted into these grooves to serve as a winch. The pull of the boat is sufficient to keep the winch from slipping out of the grooves. A handle is made by lashing a green spruce pole, about two feet long and two inches in diameter, at right angles to the winch.

Every household uses such cooking utensils as frying pans, straight kettles varying in size from one to five quarts, coffee pots, bowls, plates, cups, silver plated spoons and forks, wash basins, and washtubs. A few families have also accumulated china cups and dishes. Bottles and jars are generally saved for storing homebrew and may also function as baby bottles, candlesticks, and sugar bowls. The fifty pound drums in which dehydrated milk is purchased are used to store rice and flour. Empty sugar and flour sacks are widely used to contain tea, rice, meat, and many other commodities. Discarded oil tins are used for storing gasoline and kerosene.

Domestically manufactured utensils include moosehide gun cases, embroidered with silk thread, needle cases, made of scraps of cotton cloth, sewing kits of velvet fitted with pockets and embroidered with silk thread, and envelopes of birch bark containing sinew line or pounded beaver castors.

Productive capital. In general the producer goods needed by an individual or family, both home constructed and purchased, are found in every settlement. Thus each family is in an equal position to secure or create necessary consumer goods. Even if an object is not owned by an individual, it may generally be borrowed from others within the winter settlement or from nearby neighbors. If not immediately required by the owner, such articles are readily loaned, and rent is rarely or never demanded. If an outboard motor is loaned, the borrower is only expected to supply his own gasoline. When dogs are loaned, it is with the sole stipulation that they will be reasonably well fed and otherwise cared for. In short, the necessary productive capital is widely distributed or generally accessible.

EXPLOITATIVE ACTIVITIES

During nine or more months of the year, from the middle of August till late in May, the Kaska Indians are actively occupied in exploiting the resources of their sub-Arctic environ-

1: Honigmann E-3 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

stretcher for the next step, scraping, which removes the hair from the animal's skin. The hairs are cut short by holding them away from the hide with the fingers and then cutting with a sharp butcher knife. This is first done on the lower half of the skin. The upper portion will be cleaned when the lower hide is completely scraped of hair and the skin turned around. Following the preliminary cutting, the short lengths of hair remaining are scraped away from the hide (Pl. 8, a). The scraper is held in both hands, the work being done with powerful downward pulls on the tool.

When the skin has been cleaned, the sides containing the lashing holes are trimmed off and used in the preparation of babiche. The hide is then thrown across poles and allowed to dry for a day or two high above a smudge fire. Now the softening process begins. This consists in soaking the hide in a mixture of moose brains (which have been allowed to decompose for a week or so) and hot water. The mixture is prepared in a dishpan and left to stand for a day or two. Baking soda may be added to soften the water. The hide is soaked in the mixture for two nights. After that time it is removed and the moisture forced out of the material by wringing the skin with the hands. Selecting a spruce stump, about three inches in diameter, the woman trims the uppermost eight inches of the wood leaving a section about one inch in diameter. Holes are cut in one side of the hide and these are fitted over the peg. Holes cut on the opposite side are placed over a pole three feet long and an inch in diameter. Holding this pole the worker twists the damp hide, squeezing it free of moisture. She continues this process for about an hour, the hide then being left overnight with the pole lodged behind the stump. The next day the hide is untwisted and the pole removed. Grasping the hide along the free edge, the woman pulls in order to stretch it as far as possible. The skin is then removed from the stump and spread over a horizontal pole to dry. When dry it is again soaked for two nights in the moose brain mixture and again wrung out, stretched, and dried. A third soaking, wringing, stretching, and drying follows.

The skin is now again lashed to a stretching frame and softened by being scraped with a chipped stone or a dull ax blade set in a wooden handle. This softener is grasped near the stone with one hand, while the other hand holds the opposite end of the stick. The stone end is then rubbed against the hide with as much pressure as possible (Pl. 8, b). A portion of skin is scraped until all trace of the dull yellow color is removed and the hide shows a snowy white. First the upper portion is scraped, the hide then being turned around in order to duplicate this process for the lower portion. Softening a hide may be carried on for two days, the worker, sometimes with the help of her sisters, working about four hours a day. When the skin is as soft and pliable as a blanket it is ready for the final smoking (Pl. 8, c). In preparation for this, the skin is sewn into a tube about two or three feet wide and six or seven feet high. The top is also sewn together. The tube is supported with a tanned skin line from a pole or a group of poles. Underneath it a smudge is created in a shallow hole surrounded by sticks to keep the tube open. The hide is left hanging over this smudge until the interior has acquired a deep yellow-brown color; it is then reversed and the other side smoked. The tanned hide is now opened up and hung over a horizontal pole in the house to dry, after which it is ready for use.

The general process of tanning a hide may run over two or three weeks or even several

1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

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PROCESSING HERE

[END PLATE 8]

6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12
Dease River

the beaver men shaped double-tined points for fish spears. The Indians also relied on weirs, while gill nets were set from canoes in summer and under the ice in winter. In the latter season, before a net could be set the ice had to be broken with an ice chisel that was constructed from caribou horn. Dip nets could not be recalled. Angling occurred in summer and winter. Hooks consisted of two splinters of beaver bone crossed and lashed in the form of an X. Fish poisons do not appear to have been known.

In addition to the foods already mentioned the Dease River people readily ate brown bear, porcupine, mountain goat, rabbit, ground hog, squirrel, and gopher. Whether nutritionally important or not, the body louse, foetal animals, moose milk, and sheep milk were also consumed. The eyes of the moose and caribou provided delicacies especially reserved for children. Geese, ducks, loons, swans, ptarmigans, spruce hens, and willow grouse found a welcome part in the diet. Fish eggs did not remain neglected. Animals rarely eaten or reserved for periods of scarcity included the grizzly bear, owl, lynx, and whiskey jack. In the category of never eaten animals occurred the fox, muskrat (perhaps the pack rat is indicated?), fisher, otter, mink, wolverine, wolf, dog, frog, eagle, hawk, crow, and woodpecker. Vomiting is said to have followed any attempt to eat otter, mink, wolverine, or wolf. Mud and lily bulbs remained outside of the diet. Although consumption of human flesh rested under strong prohibition, in periods of great hunger cannibalism admittedly took place. An apprehended eater of human flesh might be isolated from his community for as long as two years. Beliefs that cannibalism led to illness or produced a craving for human flesh were denied. No evidence of ceremonial cannibalism could be obtained.

A large proportion of meat as well as eggs were boiled with the aid of hot stones, in containers of either birch bark or woven spruce root. Caribou and moose stomachs occasionally served as cooking vessels, being hung to one side of the fire. Pit cooking could not be recalled. The water in which meat had been boiled provided a soup, to which onion greens or blood might be added. People prepared animal heads, intestines, and fish on a broiling stick but did not roast food in hot ashes. Rabbits and fowl on isolated occasions might be eaten raw, as when long rain had soaked all available wood thus making it impossible to kindle fire. An informant offered two recipes for "ice cream." The first variety consisted of a mixture of grease, cranberries, and snow. In the second process cranberries or dry soap berries were added to bear or beaver grease in a kettle and the whole mixed together. Snow did not enter the compound but today sugar makes a necessary additional ingredient.

Women preserved a variety of meats, fish, and berries through sun drying. Pemmican, prepared from stone-pounded meat with grease and berries added, was stored in viscera and birch-bark baskets. Caches held the preserved food. A simple type of cache consisted of a 12-foot pole lashed onto a tree with willow-bark line. After wrapping the meat in hide or a sheet of bark, it was suspended about three-quarters of the way up the pole. A ground cache consisted of a box-like structure of poles surrounded with rocks and covered with poles weighed down by additional stones. Men also constructed four-pole shelter caches and elevated them up to 12 feet above the ground, the poles being lashed together with babiche. A double layer of poles, one running at right angles

6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12
Dease River
Tselona

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to the other, crowned such a structure. Families also utilized simpler platform caches, the food on these being covered with brush or bark held in place with heavy logs.

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Women cooked on occasions when the family ate as a unit. Food was served on bark dishes or in wooden bowls. Spoons of sheep or caribou horn facilitated eating. People took meals twice a day, morning and night, both sexes as well as children eating together. An informant denied gormandizing, remarking that the people knew very well when to cease eating.

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Tselona. The fat game in the high country attracted the families in autumn. With the onset of winter the bands descended to a fish lake, from which the men went out to fetch meat from caches, hauling back the food on skin toboggans. Often only two families spent the winter together at a fishing site—two brothers and their wives and children or about ten people in all. Summer sent the hunters to set snares for moose and goats. All summer the men "kept on the move," following game. The usual vegetable foods were gathered by women, including blueberries, low bush cranberries, strawberries, raspberries, currants, and soap berries. The latter berries were never mixed with grease because the berries would "smell" the grease and "settle down again, not make soap." In other words, they would not froth as they did when mashed with water.[16] People ate lily bulbs raw as well as cooked. Bark vessels served to catch birch and poplar sap for drinking. Both sexes chewed spruce gum but geophagy remained unpracticed. Spruce, birch, and jackpine fibers, peeled with a knife, were eaten raw, as was wild rhubarb which, however, people took pains to "skin." Wild onions were cooked with meat. The informant denied any use of willow buds and wild rice for food, the latter being unrecognized in this area. Two varieties of muskeg tea were sought by gatherers, the stems and leaves of both types being boiled. The species could be identified only as tas?huse and dimasket.

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Our informant confidently stated that moose had always populated the country of the Tselona but denied the presence of elk, wood buffalo, and mountain sheep. Moose were snared and also hunted with the bow, the hunter relying on semicircular tracking to approach within close range of his prey. In season the moose might be called with a dried moose scapula. No custom of removing moccasins while tracking game could be recalled. Sometimes a line of men moving forward in concerted action drove a moose toward a series of snares. Caribou were also caught in snares, and skin decoys further assisted in the hunting of that animal. A hunter who wanted to kill a bear when it was summer, sought to surprise the animal in a berry patch, shooting it first with an arrow and then finishing it off with a lance bearing a caribou-horn point. In winter men obtained bears by shooting them while in a den or by thrusting lances into the lair. Sometimes a smoke fire served to drive the animal out of its winter dwelling. Lances also aided in killing beaver in the spring. A porcupine could easily be clubbed to death but in winter had first to be smoked out of its house. No taboo forbade the clubbing of any animal. Following the introduction of dogs, people employed them to track game. Other

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[16] Yet Pike reports the coastal tribes to pound soap berries "till a thick froth, much resembling soap bubbles, gathers. . . . this froth, with a judicious mixture of salmon oil—or, better still, seal oil—they consider one of the things worth living for." Pike, *Through the Subarctic Forest* (1896), 35–36.